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NEW PHOTOGRAPHIC TELESCOPE PRESENTED TO THE GREENWICH OBSERVATORY BY SIR HENRY THOMPSON.

Sir HENRY THOMPSON, the eminent surgeon, has, the *Observatory* magazine states, offered the sum of £5000 sterling to the nation, through the Astronomer Royal, for the purpose of buying a telescope for Greenwich Observatory. It is not often astronomy finds such a generous patron, on this side of the Atlantic at least, and, moreover, one who can so well appreciate the exact needs of the science at the moment. For Sir HENRY THOMPSON, foreseeing that the astronomy of the future is to be photographic, and feeling that England should be well equipped in this arm, makes it a condition of his gift that the telescope is to be expressly designed for photographic purposes. So far as the plans are made, and subject to the acceptance of the offer by the Government, the instrument is to be of 26-inch aperture, just twice that of the telescopes used for the photographic chart of the heavens—in fact, the instrument is to be made from the model of the astrographic equatorial, but of exactly double the dimensions in every particular. The guiding telescope for the new instrument will be the 12¾-inch MERZ refractor with a light tube; and the 9-inch photographic objective presented by Sir HENRY THOMPSON to the Royal Observatory some years ago will also be carried on the same mounting, for use as a photo-heliograph, as at present. The new instrument, when completed, will be housed under the LASSELL Dome, on the top of the central octagon of the new Physical Observatory, now being built in the south grounds of the Royal Observatory.—*London Telegraph*, March 3, 1894.

THE SPECTRUM OF LIGHTNING.

An ingenious method of photographing the spectrum of lightning is proposed in the current number of *Wiedemann's Annalen* by G. MEYER. The difficulty of directing the slit of the spectroscope upon the flash is got over by substituting a diffraction grating for the prism. A grating ruled on glass is placed in front of the object-glass of the apparatus, the object-glass being focused for infinite distances. Under these circumstance several images of the flash are obtained, a central image produced by the undiffracted rays, and images of the first and higher orders belonging to the diffraction spectra. The number of images of each order